



MARC DANN
ATTORNEY GENERAL
STATE OF OHIO



CITY OF CLEVELAND
Mayor Frank G. Jackson

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Federal, state, local authorities announce plan to fight gun-related violence and crime – \$5.8 million Byrne Grant will fund operation of Northern Ohio Violent Crime Consortium, Ohio Gun Crime Center

CLEVELAND, October 26, 2007 / Stating that eliminating the scourge of gun violence is a priority for law enforcement at all levels, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio Gregory A. White, Ohio Attorney General Marc Dann, Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson and Youngstown Mayor Jay Williams today announced that they and officials from six other cities had banded together to form the Northern Ohio Violent Crime Consortium.

Mr. White said the Consortium, which will focus on both prevention and enforcement efforts throughout the region, will be funded through a \$5.8 million Byrne grant that was awarded to the City of Cleveland by the U.S. Department of Justice on October 16. The grant will also fund the development and operation of the Ohio Gun Crime Center that will provide state-of-the-art investigatory and forensic services to local police departments.

Along with the Department of Justice, the Ohio Attorney General's Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (BCI) and the cities of Cleveland and Youngstown, other law enforcement agencies participating in the collaborative effort include the Akron, Canton, Elyria, Lorain, Mansfield and Toledo police departments, the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF), the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the U.S. Marshals Service, the Ohio Department of Public Safety, the Office of Criminal Justice Services, the Ohio State Highway Patrol, the Ohio High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Program and the Cuyahoga County Department of Justice Affairs.

"What's happening with violence in our communities is a complex matter. There is no single initiative that will fix it, but this effort is innovative in its concept and amazing in its overall breadth. It is the crown jewel of law enforcement initiatives in this state--if not the nation," said United States Attorney Greg White.

Attorney General Dann noted that forming partnerships like the Consortium is a priority for his office. "Because criminals don't respect international, national, state or local borders, we in law enforcement must be more willing than ever to break down political, jurisdictional and

geographic barriers and work together to fight crime," Mr. Dann said. "The Consortium is a prime example of the collaboration, cooperation and innovation we all must embrace if we are to win the battle to make and keep our communities safe and secure."

Cleveland Mayor Frank G. Jackson thanked the Department of Justice for providing the funds and the United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Ohio and the Ohio Attorney General's Office for taking leadership roles in securing the grant. "In Cleveland, we know that the number of violent crimes committed with guns is going up. We are not alone and that is why I am here," Mayor Jackson said. "Eight local communities are working with the state and the federal government because we need to get guns off of our streets, out of the hands of children and out of the hands of those who would do wrong."

Youngstown Mayor Jay Williams joined Mayor Jackson in applauding the United States Attorney's Office and the Attorney General's Office and agreed that cooperation is key to battling crime in the 21st Century. "The City of Youngstown is pleased to cooperate with the City of Cleveland and other federal, state and regional law enforcement agencies to implement the Northern Ohio Violent Crime Consortium. I am convinced that only through a sustained, well-coordinated, collaborative effort will we be able to achieve success in combating crime and increasing safety for all our citizens."

According to Mr. White and Mr. Dann, the Consortium's primary goals are to curtail trafficking in firearms both in and through the state and to substantially reduce gun-related crime and violence in northern Ohio. In order to achieve those goals the participating agencies will implement a coordinated, intelligence led, data driven, strategic plan that will both enhance the effectiveness of law enforcement's efforts to deal with gun violence and promote increased community participation in crime prevention programs.

Mr. White, Mr. Dann and Mayors Jackson and Williams acknowledged that the creation of the Ohio Gun Crime Center, a joint project of the ATF and BCI, will play an invaluable role in solving gun-related crimes by making the most up-to-date technology available to local police departments that could not afford to acquire it on their own. "This type of resource sharing is essential in an era when expensive technology plays an increasingly important role in law enforcement," they said.

The new Center will include a mobile National Integrated Ballistics Information Network or NIBIN Unit that can be trucked across the state so local police departments can test fire guns they have confiscated over the years to see if they have been used to commit crimes in other areas. "This unique crime fighting tool should help clear a number of unsolved cases," Mr. Dann said.

Mr. White and Mr. Dann also said that reducing firearm trafficking in Ohio will help to reduce crime both in and outside the state because Ohio ranked seventh in the nation in terms of being a "source" state for firearms. Both noted that the state's geographic location makes it a prime thoroughfare for guns and drugs – and a logical place to mount innovative attempts to staunch the flow of both.

For more information, please contact Leo Jennings of the Ohio Attorney General's Office at 614-387-1108 or Craig Tame of the United States Attorney's Office at 216-701-4578.